Feedback

From the Editor

FROM homeland security to special operations (as signified by this month's cover), America's Army is preparing for what could be the longest period of sustained operations in our nation's history.

Our coverage of the Army's role in the war on terrorism continues with Senior Editor Heike Hasenauer's "America Regroups." She offers a compelling look at the reaction to the Sept. 11 events and takes us through the anticipation of the campaign's first salvos.

In a Total Force tour de force, Soldiers asks the secretary of the Army, the director of the Army National Guard and the chief of the Army Reserve to give us their perspectives on what might lie ahead.

We also offer two stories from Europe that are especially relevant. "Training Europe's Best" showcases NATO special operations training and "Projecting Power in Europe" provides an overview of the intricacies of quickly massing decisive combat power from Europe.

And, finally, to celebrate Veterans Day (and to redress and oversight from last year), we dedicate this issue to Vietnam veterans.

ohn & Suttle

Response to Terror

MY correspondence is in reference to the recent evil that has fallen on our nation. I am not perfect in my written correspondence and can be longwinded, so please bear with me.

During times of grief and mourning members of some institutions place a symbol of recognition or remembrance on their clothing or uniform. For example, I have seen professional sports teams in the past wear patches or arm bands in remembrance of a fallen teammate.

In the recent horrible events, our people have come together as never before. Flags are in high demand and in short supply nationwide. People are adorning themselves with red, white and blue ribbons and patriotic T-shirts in support of our nation, its military and, of course, in remembrance of those suffering because of the Sept. 11 tragedies.

Is there a way that we as soldiers may do something along the same lines? I do of course mean something identical and Armywide, or even DOD wide. Whether an arm band, a patch or some symbolic insignia, I feel it would be a good show of our loyalty to our commander in chief and our nation, and an awesome way to honor those heroes who have given their lives for our nation.

I understand that there are a number of factors that would affect such an undertaking, from the approval process to the issuing of such an item. I have researched AR 670-1 and cannot find anything in reference to this idea. I also cannot think of how to get this idea to the right people. Thank you, and God Bless America!

SSG Ryan A. Tozier Fort Hood, Texas

September Kudos

CONGRATULATIONS on Steve Harding's excellent September article "OPBAT Soldiers." It greatly enhanced my knowledge of the Army's joint counterdrug missions with the Coast Guard, this nation's fifth and smallest service branch.

Former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman and current U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was right on target when he said: "The Coast Guard provides national command authorities a unique instrument in the nation's security tool bag." Your magazine did an outstanding job of pointing out to its readers how right on target GEN Powell's remarks were over a decade ago.

Jim Dolbow Alexandria, Va.

THE command and soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, greatly appreciate your wonderful September story "OPBAT Soldiers." It is one of the most factually accurate stories I have seen published about the operation.

CPT Charles P. Johnson OPBAT Coordinator Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.

THANK you for the excellent work you do on Soldiers magazino

The publication is especially effective in portraying and highlighting the Army's history. I enjoy your series on the Army's active divisions very much. As well as informing us about the people who now soldier, it also reminds us of all the others who discharged their duty so well to keep our country safe and strong.

My very best wishes for your continued success.

SMA William Wooldridge (Ret.) via e-mail

WE appreciate your kind words, and find them especially gratifying coming from the first sergeant major of the Army.

Gaffs and Oversights

I BELIEVE the September photo of the Bradley and British vehicle has burning oil wells in the background. That would place the photo no later than November or December of 1991, by which point all the fires were put out. I'm guessing the photo you ran was actually

taken during Operation Desert Storm proper or shortly after the cease-fire.

I was there from February to September 1991 with the Corps of Engineers Kuwait Emergency Recovery Office. It looks like the desert along the road headed to Basra.

James N. Parker Jr. Savannah, Ga. WHILE reading your Summer 2001 issue of Hot Topics I came across a flaw in the picture on page 10.

One of the soldiers in the picture is running with his finger on the trigger — an action that we all know can cause death or serious injury. I know this better than most because during a livefire exercise my squad leader was running with his finger on the trigger, causing him to shoot me in the back of the right arm.

SSG Darren J. Smith via e-mail

THANKS for your input. The fact that the photo shows a safety violation is the main reason we chose to use it in the Risk Management supplement.

WE enjoyed the September issue, especially Gil High's "Around the Services" department.

We noted, however, that the

Air Force segment of the article mentions "the grave of Air Force Lt. George E.M. Kelly." Kelly was tragically killed in a crash at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in 1911, while flying as an Army aviator.

Since the U.S. Air Force was not created until Sept. 18, 1947, it would be physically impossible for Kelly, having been dead for some 36 years, to have been an Air Force lieutenant

This dark pre-1947 phase of Air Force history is frequently overlooked by those in blue uniforms, but we Army aviators are proud of our heritage — which dates back to the Wright Brothers and the days of Civil War balloons.

CW5 Robert B. Bailey (Ret.) via e-mail

Name That Weapon

THE weapon 1LT Thomas E. White is shown holding on your

August cover is an XM-177E1 submachine gun.

The weapon was developed during the Vietnam conflict for use by special forces soldiers and air base security personnel. The main difference between an XM-177 and an XM-177E1 was the latter's forward assist.

Since there was only a seven-part difference between an M-16A1 and an XM-177E1 and they could be ordered as a conversion kit, many M-16A1s were converted in-country on an informal basis.

The only drawback to the weapon was a rather large muzzle flash due to the short barrel.

Charles Johnson via e-mail

Beret Blues

A COUPLE of days ago I was issued the black beret, and I read as much of the paperwork on caring for it as I could find.

If I understand it right, you take a floppy hat, wet it, shave it, form it, put it on, form it again, and when you take it off it is still floppy — so you have to start the ordeal all over again.

By the way, it will roll up and fit in your pocket very nicely, but that is not allowed. It does not block the sun from your eyes, but you can't wear sunglasses in formation. If you have any hair it does not fit right, so even though you have a regulation hair cut, get a buzz cut so the beret will look better.

Name withheld by request

Soldiers is for soldiers and DA civilians. We invite readers' views. Stay under 150 words — a post card will do — and include your name, rank and address. We'll withhold your name if you desire and may condense your views because of space. We can't publish or answer every one, but we'll use representative views. Write to: Feedback, Soldiers, 9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581, or e-mail: soldiers@belvoir.army.mil.

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